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Answers to Many Questions

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A radio talk by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, broadcast in the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour program, Thursday, March 9, 1939, by the NBC and 100 associated radio stations.

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MR. BAKER

And now Ruth Van Deman with more information for homemakers --- information growing out of the research carried on by the Bureau of Home Economics.

By the way, Ruth, I have a question here from one of our listeners in Colorado --- something about our last broadcast 2 weeks ago today.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Good. I'll add it to this pile. John Baker, you and Hazel Stiebeling certainly did stir up the questions.

MR. BAKER

That so? Well it's something to know we have listeners.

MISS VAN DEMAN

A listener in Nebraska wants to know what in the world you mean by "pot likker" --

MR. BAKER

Perhaps you'd better answer that.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Oh no. She was asking you.

MR. BAKER

Well, speaking as an old Southern gentleman I'd say, ma'am, that pot liquor is the water you boil the ham bone and the turnip greens in--- That right?

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, Colonel. That's a very good definition. You remember Doctor Stiebeling said that probably half the minerals and vitamins cook out into the pot liquor. Naturally if it isn't served with the meat and vegetables, or saved for soup, out goes some of the very best of the food value.

MR. BAKER

Is it necessary to have so much "juice" when you cook greens?

MISS VAN DEMAN

No, it is not. That's a good point. I'm glad you brought it up.

MR. BAKER

I thought maybe I was just being pernickety. But I don't like vegetables swimming in a lake of sea green juice.

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MISS VAN DEMAN

You don't have to with vegetables cooked in the modern way. The idea now is to use just as little water as possible -- no more than needed to keep them from sticking to the pan. Some kinds are even better steamed or baked in their own juices. I suppose that the most common sin against vegetables is overcooking. Greens especially are very easily overcooked. It ruins their fresh green color -- turns them olive drab.

MR. BAKER

And gives them an olive drab taste.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, it takes the flavor out of some, and puts too much in others -- cabbage and its cousins, for instance. The longer members of the cabbage family stay on the stove, the stronger their flavor seems to get.

MR. BAKER

And the farther the "perfume" spreads.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Perfume, did you say?

MR. BAKER

In a manner of speaking.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Well, this card you handed me from Colorado seems to be something else about cabbage. This listener wants to know what it was that Dr. Stiebeling said was better than white cabbage and bleached lettuce.

MR. BAKER

The greener leaves, wasn't it, for iron and vitamin A?

MISS VAN DEMAN

And calcium. The greener the leaves the higher they seem to be in all those food values. Which reminds me, I think one of the questions in the pile there is about different colored oranges -- pale versus deep colored fruit.

MR. BAKER

Umm-- This must be it. Postmarked Temple, Texas?

MISS VAN DEMAN

That's the one. Mind reading it?

MR. BAKER

"Dear Miss Van Deman: Can you tell me if the government has made any experiments to determine whether there's a difference in the vitamin content of grapefruit and oranges, and whether there is a difference in the oranges with pale yellow pulp and dark orange pulp?"

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, our nutrition people have done quite a few experiments on vitamins in citrus fruits -- some of them in cooperation with the Plant Industry people who are developing new varieties and hybrids like the tangelo, and tangor, and orangequat.

MR. BAKER

Orangequat?

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, a cross between a tangerine and a kumquat. Tangelos are a grapefruit--tangerine hybrid.

MR. BAKER

Sounds good.

MISS VAN DEMAN

They say it is. Sorry, I haven't had a chance to try it yet. It seems to be a general rule with all the citrus fruits that the deeper yellow the juice and pulp, the more vitamin A they contain. Grapefruit has so little of the yellow pigment that it doesn't rate as a good source of vitamin A. But it's near the top in vitamin C -- the one we need for nutrition of the teeth -- to keep them in a healthy condition.

MR. BAKER

All the citrus fruits are on the vitamin C list, as I remember.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes -- oranges, lemons, grapefruit, tangerines, and the new ones that haven't got into commercial production yet. They're all high in vitamin C.

MR. BAKER

Is it true that the vitamin C disappears into thin air or somewhere, if you let the orange juice or the grapefruit stand overnight in the refrigerator?

MISS VAN DEMAN

Oh, probably you lose some, but not enough to worry about if you keep the fruit covered and very cold.

MR. BAKER

That takes in sliced oranges, and orange juice, and grapefruit fixed ready for breakfast - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, to all practical purposes it's about the same for them all. Strictly speaking, the more you expose the juice and the pulp of citrus fruit to the air, the more vitamin C they lose. But the real point is this. There are hardly any two lots of fruit that have precisely the same vitamin value. Vitamin C is the most unstable and elusive of all the vitamins. The body can't even build up a store of it, as it can of vitamin A and the others.

MR. BAKER

Then if a person wants to be sure he's getting the vitamin C he needs, it's a good idea to eat plenty of citrus fruits right along - - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN

A very good idea.

MR. BAKER

--- And all kinds of citrus fruits.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes.

MR. BAKER

Then he won't have to bother about the differences between one variety and another.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, that's the principle to go on. The whole group of citrus fruits is probably our richest source of vitamin C in the winter time.

MR. BAKER

What about our good friend the tomato?

MISS VAN DEMAN

Oh, yes, I wasn't going to pass him by. Tomatoes, fresh, canned, juice or pulp, are very valuable for vitamin C. But you have to drink about twice as much tomato juice as orange juice to get your daily quota of vitamin C. That's all.

MR. BAKER

But that's no hardship ---

MISS VAN DEMAN

No, I didn't mean that it was. All the fruit juices are very easy to take. I often start the day with one at breakfast and finish off with another for dessert at dinner.

MR. BAKER

Ruth, do you have any kind of a list of the foods rich in the different vitamins, or anything that tells what vitamins are?

MISS VAN DEMAN

Yes, we have a mimeographed pamphlet on vitamins - going down the alphabet from A to G. It tells very briefly what the various vitamins do for the body - why we need to have them - and gives a list of the foods rich in each one.

MR. BAKER

Is that vitamin pamphlet available to Farm and Home listeners?

MISS VAN DEMAN

Oh yes, it's part of our service to the public.

MR. BAKER

In the interest of the general welfare. Well, I'm going to repeat that offer of the vitamin pamphlet in a moment. But before I do that do you mind, Ruth, if I read a very frivolous little verse? It has a line about vitamins.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Surely, let's have it. We need to laugh at ourselves a little now and then.

MR. BAKER

Here goes then --

"Methusaleh ate what they put on his plate
And never -- as people do now --
Did he reck the amount of the calorie count ...
He ate it because it was 'Chow'.
He wasn't disturbed as at supper he sat,
Destroying a roast or a pie,
By the thought it was lacking in granular fat
Or a couple of vitamins shy.
He carefully chewed every species of food,
Unworried by troubles or fears,
Lest his health might be hurt
By some fancy dessert,
And he lived -- more than nine hundred years!"

MISS VAN DEMAN

Wonderful. I'll take that back to Doctor Booher, our vitamin expert.

MR. BAKER

And now on the serious side with your permission, Ruth, I'll repeat that offer of yours to send anyone who wants it a copy of the pamphlet on Foods Rich in Vitamins. Write to the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture here in Washington, D. C., and ask for the leaflet Foods Rich in Vitamins. And, Ruth Van Deman, we'll be looking for you next Thursday.

MISS VAN DEMAN

Thank you. I have it down on my calendar.

MR. BAKER

You're not superstitious about the Ides of March.

